

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A remote that is capable of controlling a number of devices, the remote acquiring identification data from a particular device at which it is pointed, processing the data to determine command protocols associated with the particular device, and formatting control commands for the particular device input to the remote by a user according to the command protocols associated with the particular device.
2. The remote as in Claim 1, wherein the remote acquires identification data from the particular device at which it is pointed by receiving a signal emitted from the device at which it is pointed.
3. The remote as in Claim 2, wherein the remote comprises a sensor that detects the signal emitted by the particular device in a narrow field of view about the direction in which the remote is pointed.
4. The remote as in Claim 2, wherein the signal is an IR signal that includes the appliance code of the particular device.
5. The remote as in Claim 4, wherein the remote comprises an IR sensor that detects IR signals in a narrow field of view about the direction in which the remote is pointed.

6. The remote as in Claim 1, wherein the remote comprises a database that comprises identification data of the number of devices and their associated command protocols, the remote using the identification data of the particular device to determine the command protocols associated with the particular device.
7. The remote as in claim 1, wherein the remote acquires identification data from the particular device at which it is pointed by capturing at least one image in the direction in which the remote is pointed, the at least one captured image including the particular device.
8. The remote as in Claim 7, wherein the remote comprises a camera that captures images in the direction in which the remote is pointed.
9. The remote as in Claim 7, wherein the remote processes the image to identify the particular device at which the remote is pointed.
10. The remote as in Claim 9, wherein the remote identifies the particular device in the image using image recognition processing.
11. The remote as in Claim 10, wherein the remote comprises a database that includes representations of images of the number of devices and their

associated command protocols, the remote determining a representation of an image in the database that matches the particular device in the image, the remote using command protocols associated with the representation of the image in the database to format input control commands.

12. The remote as in Claim 1, wherein the remote acquires identification data from the particular device at which it is pointed after the user inputs an acquisition command in the remote, wherein, after processing the identification data acquired to determine command protocols associated with the particular device, the remote formats control commands for the particular device input to the remote by the user according to the command protocols associated with the particular device until the user inputs another acquisition command.
13. The remote as in Claim 1, wherein the remote acquires identification data from two or more particular devices at which it is pointed, the remote processing the identification data and displaying the identity of the two or more particular devices to the user, the user providing a selection input to the remote selecting one of the two or more particular devices identified, the remote determining command protocols associated with the selected device and formatting control commands for the selected particular device input to the remote by the user according to the command protocols associated with the selected particular device.

14. A method for controlling one particular device selected from among a number of devices based upon a selection direction, the method comprising the steps of: acquiring identification data from the particular device, determining command protocols associated with the particular device using the identification data, and formatting control commands for the particular device according to the determined command protocols for the particular device.
15. The method as in Claim 14, wherein the step of acquiring identification data from the particular device comprises receiving an IR signal containing the appliance code transmitted from the particular device.
16. The method as in Claim 15, wherein the step of determining command protocols associated with the particular device using the identification data comprises using the appliance code included in the IR signal to consult a compilation of appliance codes for the number of devices and their associated command protocols and selecting the command protocols associated in the compilation with the appliance code of the particular device.
17. The method as in Claim 14, wherein the step of acquiring identification data from the particular device comprises capturing one or more images of the particular device.

18. The method as in Claim 17, wherein the step of determining command protocols associated with the particular device using the identification data comprises using the image to find a matching image representation in a compilation of image representations for the number of devices and their associated command protocols and selecting the command protocols associated in the compilation with the image representation that matches the image of the particular device.